

WASHINGTON FOCUS:

Ghana Gamble Paying Off

By CHARLES BARTLETT

WASHINGTON: A new cycle of difficult relations with Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah may be at hand but the heavy bet that the United States made two years ago on the Volta River Project still keeps its promising look.

Recent American visitors to Accra have observed a decline in Nkrumah's sympathies toward the United States. It is feared this mood may be hardened by the recent effort to assassinate him.

Nkrumah's disgruntlement appears to center upon a suspicion that our Central Intelligence Agency is encroaching upon African politics. Following the attempts upon his life in 1962, his propaganda spokesmen launched a campaign to lay the blame upon the CIA. This ceased only after Nkrumah was assured by President Kennedy that his intelligence agents were not at work in Ghana.

Nkrumah's suspicions are fed by the Soviets, Chinese, East Germans, and even some Britishers who are jealous of the growth of American influence in Ghana. He was rendered more vulnerable to his suspicions by the death of Kennedy, whom he respected.

Nkrumah can be forgiven a sense of insecurity after five determined efforts to kill him. He has been awarded his nation's presidency for life but even at 54, his tenure cannot be considered certain.

His repressions against political opposition have fostered definite unrest. His policy of progressive taxes has brought opposition from his own party. He is criticized for losing contact with his people through an excessive absorption with his own safety.

The increased case of the State De-



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partment's relations with Nkrumah is a mark of its growing composure in dealing with the uncommitted African nations and its awareness that these new governments do not intend to fall easily into the hands of Communists or capitalists.

Nkrumah is a socialist with many intuitive preferences for the single-party Soviet system. Some of his expressions have had an ominously anti-Western flavor. He has been disillusioned in some of his commercial dealings with Russia, but continues to go into new transactions.

In his decision to back the Volta River Project, President Kennedy was betting over \$100 million in long-term loans upon a country whose leader had shown only a marginal sense of financial responsibility and only a pragmatic interest in the West.

The doubts about Nkrumah persist but the bet on the Volta Project appears to have been a good one. The Ghanaians have faithfully met their share of the costs and the construction is proceeding on schedule. The progress has encouraged the United States and the World Bank to become totally committed to completion of the dam and aluminum smelter.

The American participation has involved Ghana with the non-Communist world to an irreversible degree. The country's future is tied to the dam and smelter, which depend in turn upon the West.

So Nkrumah may be angry at the CIA, uncertain about President Johnson, and upset by the return of the Belgians to the Congo. He may move in one of his cycles toward the Russians and cause unpleasant moments in Washington. But the United States would have no reason to wish for his assassination. Ghanaians are anxious to draw upon both worlds and the view persists that Nkrumah will not break his country's ties with the West.

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